Overbridge at Morappur

1407. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether work on railway overbridge at Morappur railway station in Dharmapuri station has not started although the matching grant has clearly been given by Tamil Nadu Government;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) by when the work regarding construction of overbridge will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The work on Bridge proper *i.e.* across track has also been taken up and sub-structure work is complete. There has been delay in works due to failure of the Agency fixed to execute the work. Tenders for fixing new Agency have been opened. The work is likely to be completed in Railway portion by the end of financial year 2005-06.

Acute shortage of drinking water at railway stations

1408. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is an acute shortage of drinking water at various railway stations being faced by 98 per cent of the passengers; and

(b) the steps Government have taken to address the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Indian Railways have more than 8000 stations. Railways endeavour is to provide drinking water to passengers at all stations. Some small stations do not have adequate water source either due to absence of water supply from municipality or presence of brackish water, inadequate ground water yield from hand pumps. Further, even at some of those stations where piped/hand pump supply exists, water scarcity comes up in summer due to lesser supplies by municipality, lowering in ground water level etc. and increased demand. In such cases,

availability of drinking water is ensured at stations by arranging water through private water tankers. Even water special trains are run in areas facing heavy shortage of water. Water coolers, mobile water trollies, matkas are arranged for better availability of water to the passengers. Many Non-Government Organisations also supplement water supply to passengers. In addition, packaged drinking water/natural mineral water is made available for sale through static as well as mobile catering/vending units.

Reconstruction of outlived rail bridges/culverts

†1409. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that it is unsafe to operate trains on a number of such rail bridges/culverts as these have outlived their normal life;

(b) if so, the scheme of Government to reconstruct such bridges/ culverts; and

(c) the number of such rail bridges/culverts which need immediate attention from safety point of view?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The life of the bridge is not based on its age but on physical condition as ascertained by inspections. Railways have a well laid down system of multi-tier annual inspection of bridges. Those bridges which require repair/rehabilitation are taken up on a programmed basis. Bridges requiring immediate attention are taken up on priority and are classified as Distressed Bridges. If required, speed restrictions are imposed till repairs are carried out. Distressed bridges are not unsafe for train operations. There are 122 distressed bridges as on 01-04-2005 out of which 84 are targeted for repair/rehabilitation during the 2005-06.

New catering policy

†1410. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:
SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to formulate a New Catering Policy;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.